From the USAToday Editorial Page (October 5, 2010):

"The company discovered in late 2008 that some Motrin tablets, made by its McNeil division, were not dissolving properly, possibly affecting their potency. So did executives publicly announce the problem and recall the defective product?

"Hardly. Instead, J&J hired a contractor that quietly dispatched workers to retailers to buy up thousands of the Motrin vials. The workers were told not to mention a recall and to act like regular customers. In testimony last spring before a congressional panel, a top McNeil executive denied knowing

about the plan

. But internal e-mails show executives approved it and one even bragged about it: 'This was a major win for us as it limits the press that will be seen.'

"The Motrin coverup is even more puzzling because J&J had far bigger quality-control problems to worry about, ones that would soon lead to a recall of 130 million bottles of children's and infant's liquid medicines . The Food and Drug Administration found serious lapses at McNeil plants in Fort Washington, Pa., and Puerto Rico that might have allowed products to be contaminated by metal particles or bacteria, or to contain too much active ingredient.
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"All of which leads to the conclusion that the nation needs a muscular watchdog to keep drugs safe. Several lawmakers are pushing just such a measure. Today, the FDA has no authority to order a recall. The agency can only issue warnings to companies and urge them to act. And it can only seize products after the cumbersome process of winning a court order."

In July 2010, Chairman Towns introduced legislation (H.R. 5740) to provide the FDA mandatory recall authority. To learn more about the chairman's bill, click here .